AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A chemically modified double stranded short interfering ~~nucleic~~ ribonucleic acid ~~(siNA)~~ (siRNA) molecule ~~that down regulates expression of a vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) gene~~ comprising a complementary sense strand and an antisense strand, wherein:

   a. each strand of said ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule ~~comprises~~ is about ~~19~~ 18 to about ~~21~~ 27 ~~base pairs~~ nucleotides in length;

   b. the antisense strand of said siRNA molecule comprises about 18 to about 27 nucleotides that are complementary to a vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) nucleotide sequence corresponding to SEQ ID NO:474;

   c. the sense strand of said siRNA molecule comprises a portion of said VEGF nucleotide sequence of about 18 to about 27 nucleotides; and

   d. said siRNA molecule comprises at least one 2'-O-methyl or 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro nucleotide.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim 1, wherein said ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule comprises ribonucleotides.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Canceled)

6. (Canceled)

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)

9. (Canceled)

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10. (Canceled)

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim ~~6~~ 1, wherein one or more purine nucleotides present in the sense ~~region~~ strand are 2'-deoxy purine nucleotides.

15. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim ~~6~~ 1, wherein ~~the~~ one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in the sense ~~region~~ strand are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro pyrimidine nucleotides.

16. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim ~~9~~ 1, wherein the fragment comprising said sense ~~region~~ strand includes a terminal cap moiety at the 5'-end, the 3'-end, or both of the 5' and 3' ends of the ~~fragment comprising said~~ sense ~~region~~ strand.

17. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim 16, wherein said terminal cap moiety is an inverted deoxy abasic moiety.

18. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim ~~6~~ 1, wherein ~~the~~ one or more pyrimidine nucleotides ~~of said~~ present in the antisense ~~region~~ strand are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro pyrimidine nucleotides.

19. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim ~~6~~ 1, wherein ~~the~~ one or more purine nucleotides ~~of said~~ present in the antisense ~~region~~ strand are 2'-O-methyl purine nucleotides.

20. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim ~~6~~ 1, wherein ~~the~~ one or more purine nucleotides present in ~~said~~ the antisense ~~region~~ strand ~~comprise~~ are 2'-deoxy- purine nucleotides.

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21. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim ~~18~~ 1, wherein ~~said~~ the antisense ~~region~~ strand comprises a phosphorothioate internucleotide linkage at the 3' end of said antisense ~~region~~ strand.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (Canceled)

25. (Canceled)

26. (Canceled)

27. (Canceled)

28. (Canceled)

29. (Canceled)

30. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim ~~9~~ 1, wherein the 5'-end of the ~~fragment comprising said~~ antisense ~~region~~ strand ~~optionally~~ includes a terminal phosphate group.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Canceled)

33. (Currently Amended) A ~~pharmaceutical~~ composition comprising the ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim 1 in ~~an~~ a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.